

VZCZCXRO3496

OO RUEHDE RUEHROV RUEHTRO

DE RUEHNR #1133 1591559

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

O 081559Z JUN 09 ZDK

FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9751

INFO RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RHMFISS/CJTF HOA IMMEDIATE

RUZEFAA/CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE IMMEDIATE

RUZEFAA/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE IMMEDIATE

RHMCSUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 001133

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E AND A/S CARSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/08/2019

TAGS: PGOV PREL KDEM PTER KPAO SO

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - SHABELLE MEDIA DIRECTOR ASSASSINATED

REF: NAIROBI 1122

Classified By: Pol/Econ Officer Jessica Davis Ba for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

-----  
Summary  
-----

¶11. (C) The Director of Shabelle Media Network and close Post contact Mukhtar Muhammad Hirabe was killed in Mogadishu on June 7. The assassination, apparently targeted, came less than an hour after Hirabe had spoken with the Somalia Unit about the status of Hassan Dahir Aweys (reftel). This incident marks the fifth death of a Somali journalist in ¶2009. Post has issued a local press statement condemning the murder, and also sent a condolence letter to Hirabe's family.  
End summary.

-----  
Another Journalist  
Assassinated  
-----

¶12. (C) Mukhtar Muhammad Hirabe, Director of Shabelle Media Network and a close Post contact, was killed in an apparent targeted assassination in Mogadishu's Bakara Market on June ¶7. Reports indicate that two or three men armed with pistols approached Hirabe and a colleague, Head of Programs Ahmed Umar Hashi, and fired multiple shots into Hirabe's head. Hashi escaped with injuries and remains hospitalized in Mogadishu. The shooting came less than an hour after Hirabe had spoken with the Somalia Unit about the reported wounding or death of Hassan Dahir Aweys (reftel). Shabelle had also been actively reporting on the status of Aweys after rumors of his injury or demise surfaced over the weekend. Contacts speculate that the murder may have been related to Hirabe's reporting on Aweys.

¶13. (SBU) Hirabe had been subject to adverse action before, including an arrest in March 2008 and a near-miss in February 2009 when a colleague with whom Hirabe was walking was killed. As has become the unfortunate pattern in these cases, journalist groups, including the Somali Coalition for Freedom of Expression (SOCFEX) and the National Union for Somali Journalists (NUSOJ), issued statements condemning the murder and calling for the protection of all Somali journalists. Hirabe left two wives and five children.

-----  
Post's Actions  
-----

¶4. (SBU) Post has issued a local press release condemning the killing. We have also conveyed a letter of condolence to Hirabe's family. We remain engaged on issues concerning the safety of journalists in Somalia, coordinating with journalists, advocacy groups and the Transitional Federal Government.

RANNEBERGER